



June 12, 2024

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## **Exploration Portal Opening Dedication Friday, June 21, at 11:00 a.m.**

**Best Visuals:** Thirty charming preschoolers from **Educare California at Silicon Valley**, a longtime museum partner, will act as our first “test pilots” for the big reveal before bursting through the gate into **Exploration Portal** to discover, play, and explore.

**Educare** families from one of the most financially disadvantaged areas of San Jose will enjoy a free **Family Day** at the museum that includes busing and lunch as part of the museum’s commitment to serve all children in the community.

### **Speakers at Dedication:**

Local dignitaries include Santa Clara County Supervisor Cindy Chavez; San Jose Councilmember Omar Torres; Andrea MacKenzie, General Manager of Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority; Richard Santos, Board Member of Santa Clara Valley Water District, and FIRST 5 Santa Clara County CEO Jennifer Kelleher.

## **Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose Opens Exploration Portal**

*San Jose’s newest outdoor educational play space where children will explore the intersection of math, art, and nature*

San Jose, CA – June 12, 2024 – [Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose](#) is helping children discover patterns, proportion, scale, and symmetry at the intersection of math, science, and nature with its new outdoor educational play space. [Exploration Portal’s](#) eight interactive exhibits will provide endless opportunities for STEM-based discovery and learning in nature.

“Children learn through patterns, and by linking patterns, scale, proportion and symmetry to the things we see in nature, we’re helping children better understand the natural world,” said **Marilee Jennings, executive director of Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose.**

“Thinking about patterns also helps children make sense of math and science, and we know that introducing these early in life nurtures critical thinking, problem-solving, and sets the stage for future academic success,” added Jennings. “STEM is a natural approach to early childhood education because children have an innate curiosity and STEM gives them tools to question, investigate, and hypothesize.”

In addition to STEM learning, sustainability and inspiring tomorrow’s environmental stewards were top of mind in designing *Exploration Portal*. The space role models the use of drought-tolerant and native plants for biodiversity and water conservation, while also improving the health of the Guadalupe River.

“Having the opportunity for **Educare** to partner with Children’s Discovery Museum for this amazing launch is really exciting,” said **Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools, Mary Ann Dewan.** “Children learn best when they have hands-on experiences.”

### **Exploration Portal Features**

Having fun while learning continues to be the museum’s trademark. **Exploration Portal** invites full-body engagement, beginning with the **Beehive Climber**, a hexagon patterned structure modeled on a traditional beehive that kids will climb on, over and through to immerse themselves in pattern exploration. **Whirling Flyers** features objects both from the natural and created worlds and shows how they fly at different altitudes powered by kid-energy. **Patterns Everywhere** will mesmerize visitors with beauty and delight while discovering that the image is actually an intensive magnification of an ordinary strawberry or the wing of butterfly, for example.

With the **Measure Me!** exhibit, kids will use their own bodies as a measuring device and be surprised to learn that one’s forearm equals the length of their foot. Four **Giant Kaleidoscopes** with varying shaped viewing windows will allow children to investigate patterns in the surrounding environment, and **Rocks that Sing**, stone Xylophone-style instruments, will fascinate all who “play” the melodic sounds they make.

Three giant **Smartflowers** in the space mimic the sun's relationship to flowers, demonstrating how to harness efficient solar energy. The petals open when the sun rises and moves across the sky and fold up when the sun sets – all in dramatic and large-scale fashion.

The museum's **Smartflowers** are the first to be installed in northern California.

## **Sustainable Designs**

The museum believes that turning a natural space into a created environment should deliver more benefit than it did originally, inspiring staff and project architects to create sustainable designs that support environmental stewardship.

The landscape and architectural designs improve the health of the Guadalupe River by mitigating toxic run-off, preventing pollution from entering the riparian corridor, and absorbing rainwater. Planted **bio swales** and **overflow retention gardens** feed aquifers and prevent pollution from vehicles, airplanes and surfaces from entering the river. **Drought tolerant plants** with the most interesting patterns were selected that also meet Santa Clara Valley Water District's guidelines for biodiversity near riparian locations.

**Granitecrete permeable paving** on all pathways allows stormwater to pass through and be absorbed into the ground underneath. Renewable **wood** is the preferred building material, including California-grown bamboo for the shade structure.

## **About Us**

**Exploration Portal Major Donors:** title sponsor **Xu Family Charitable Foundation, County of Santa Clara, FIRST 5 Santa Clara County, Google, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, Santa Clara Valley Water District** and **Molly and Barry Swenson**. The new space is adjacent to *Bill's Backyard* and completes the southern border of the museum's footprint.

## **Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose**

Kids lead the way at Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose, exploring and discovering through open-ended, play-based learning. Over 150 hands-on exhibits and programs in the sciences, humanities, arts, nature, and health spark curiosity and ignite family fun where children build life skills in creative and critical thinking, problem-solving, and confidence. The nonprofit celebrates people and diverse cultures, creates authentic connections, and builds global understanding. Welcoming more than 10 million visitors since 1990, the award-winning museum inspires creativity, curiosity, and lifelong learning inside the stunning 50,000-square-foot purple building designed by the late world-renowned Mexico City architect Ricardo Legoretta, and outside in the half-acre nature space. For more information about the museum, visit [www.cdm.org](http://www.cdm.org).

## **About Educare California at Silicon Valley**

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